

**CLIENT EDUCATION**  
**COMBINED ORAL CONTRACEPTIVE PILLS**  
**“WHAT TO DO IF YOU FORGET TO TAKE YOUR BIRTH**  
**CONTROL PILLS”**

If you miss 1 “active” pill:

1. Take it as soon as you remember. Take the next pill at your regular time. This means you may take 2 pills in 1 day.
2. You do not need to use a back-up birth control method if you have sex.
3. The clinician should offer emergency contraception if the missed pill is at the beginning of the pack.

If you miss 2 “active” pills in a row in week 1 or week 2 of your pack:

1. Take 2 pills on the day you remember and 2 pills the next day.
2. Then take 1 pill a day until you finish the pack.
3. You could become pregnant if you have sex in the 7 days after you miss pills. You must use another birth control method (such as condoms or spermicide) as a back-up method for those 7 days.

If you miss 2 “active” pills in a row in week 3:

1. If you are a Sunday starter:  
Keep taking 1 pill every day until Sunday. On Sunday, throw out the rest of the pack and start a new pack of pills that same day.  
  
If you are a Day 1 starter:  
Throw out the rest of the pill pack and start a new pack that same day.
2. You may not have your period this month but this is expected. However, if you miss your period 2 months in a row, call your health care professional because you might be pregnant.
3. You could become pregnant if you have sex in the 7 days after you miss pills. You must use another birth control method (such as condoms or spermicide) as a back-up method for those 7 days.

If you miss 3 or more “active” pills in a row (during the first 3 weeks):

1. If you are a Sunday starter:  
Keep taking 1 pill every day until Sunday. On Sunday, throw out the rest of the pack and start a new pack of pills that same day.

If you are a Day 1 starter:

Throw out the rest of the pill pack and start a new pack that same day.

2. You may not have your period this month but this is expected. However, if you miss your period 2 months in a row, call your health care professional because you might be pregnant.
3. You could become pregnant if you have sex in the 7 days after you miss pills. You must use another birth control method (such as condoms or spermicide) as a back-up method for those 7 days.

If you forget any of the 7 “reminder” pills in week 4:

1. Throw away the pills you missed.
2. Keep taking one pill each day until the pack is empty.
3. You do not need a back-up method.

If you are still not sure what to do about the pills you have missed:

1. Use a back-up method anytime you have sex.
2. Keep taking 1 “active” pill each day until you can reach your health care provider.

You should still have a “period” each month. If this is delayed, or if you have a lighter-than-normal period, you should take a pregnancy test immediately. If this test is positive, please call your clinician.